provision of an appropriate education for children with disabilities. In this way, improved learning and safe environments are ensured for all students.

Positive Behavioral Support

Everyone behaves in ways that meet his or her needs. Challenging behaviors serve the same functions for some students as appropriate behaviors serve others. Although challenging behavior meets the immediate needs of some students, it interferes with their learning and the learning of others.

Positive behavioral support does not focus merely on changing the student and stopping the inappropriate behavior. Changing the systems, altering environments, teaching appropriate behavior or academic skills, and rewarding appropriate behavior are positive behavioral support strategies. The goal becomes to develop an understanding of the behavior's purpose, to teach the student new prosocial behavior and appropriate ways to make their feelings and needs known (Ruef, 1998).

h Positive behavioral support is neither a new commercial package, nor a new theory of behavior.

h Positive behavioral support focuses on creating and sustaining school environments that encourage appropriate conduct for all students.

h Positive behavioral support is part of an integrated approach which systematically utilizes procedures associated within the four systems existing in schools: schoolwide, settingwide, classroom, and individual (Wunder & Lindsey, 1999).

h Positive behavioral support reduces the effectiveness of inappropriate behavior and makes desired behavior more functional (Sugai & Horner, 1998).

Traditional behavior management focused on eliminating the undesired behavior with punishment. Ruef (1998) likens this to "treating the symptom and ignoring the disease."

Utilizing Positive Behavioral Support

The foundation of any positive behavioral support plan is a functional assessment of the challenging behavior. When a student demonstrates inappropriate behavior, the following steps can help teachers and staff begin the process of understanding the purpose of the behavior (Wunder & Lindsey, 1997).

Behavior Management vs Positive Behavioral Support

	Behavior Management	Positive Behavioral Support
What is the problem?	The student	Systems and setting may not be appropriate Lack of skills Lack of knowledge about inappropriate behavior
What needs to be changed?	The student	One of the systems may need to be adjusted Some settings may need to be adapted Skills may need to be taught
Who's responsible?	The student	Teachers, administrators, parents, and the student share responsibility
What is the goal?	Stop the undesired behavior	Understand the purpose of the behavior, so the student can replace it with new appropriate behavior or skills
How do we accomplish the goal?	Punish the student	Use positive approaches to reinforce appropriate behavior
How long is this going to take?	This takes days or weeks to eliminate one behavior for one student	This can take years to create effective systems But, once in place, this proactive approach prevents many problems
Who does this?	An authority figure or someone specializing in behavior management, implementing in one setting	A collaborative team, implementing across different settings
Does it work?	May stop undesired behavior in one setting A more intense inappropriate behavior may replace the behavior	Replaces undesired behavior with new behavior or set of skills Generalizes to all settings

5. Give the student choices and honor that choice.
6. If the student makes a choice not offered, honor the choice unless it would disrupt or prevent the student from meeting goals.
7. If the student fails to make a choice, provide natural consequences (you make the choice).
8. Embed choice into an activity or assignment.

Adapt the Curriculum

Research has shown that assignments which students could connect to their home or community, reflected their interests, and were age-appropriate were associated with positive student behavior (Ferro et al., 1996).

Ruef (1998) suggests teachers consider these four elements when designing instruction:
1. Have I taken advantage of the students' interests and preferences?
2. Am I utilizing different modalities (visual, auditory, and tactile) when I present this information?
3. Is the task too long or too short? Is the level of difficulty appropriate for my students?
4. Have I adjusted my method of presentation and monitoring to meet the needs of my students?

Provide More Support

Students with challenging behavior may need more support with academic or social tasks. This additional support can be from the teacher, paraprofessional, or peers. Peer support depends on the individual students involved and may not be successful in every instance. Ruef (1998) outlines two types of peer support:
1. Peer tutoring. The instruction of one student by another student has been shown to be effective with practice of skills, monitoring of learning, and reinforcement of teacher-directed instruction.

*F*or more information about functional behavioral assessment and positive behavior support, see **Innovations** for November 1997 & 1999.

2. PALS *(Pair, Arrange, Limit, Structure).* This approach has been utilized successfully with younger students in the reinforcement of social skills. This type of peer support structures the environment.
h*Pair*: typical learners are paired in activities with other students who may need additional practice.
h*Arrange*: adults reduce their rate of interaction during the activity.
h*Limit*: the number and variety of materials available are limited during the activity.
h*Structure*: the students work toward a cooperative goal and understand their role in achievement of the goal.

Utilize Positive Reinforcement

Most students will follow the rules of the school and the classroom without incident. Some students with challenging behavior don't have the skills, either social, behavioral, or academic, to find school activities rewarding. A few students will require a structured reinforcement system, which utilizes extrinsic rewards for appropriate behavior and work completion.

Teachers can make the climate of their classroom more positive by appreciating appropriate behavior with praise, positive comments, and sincere affection for all students.

Positive behavioral support is a comprehensive, research-based, and proactive approach which can produce comprehensive change for students with challenging behaviors (Ruef, 1998).

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